Who are the super elite in the knee world? We asked…and it's a small list. Knee surgeons at the top of their game let us know their thoughts on the best orthopedic surgeons in their subspecialty.

Here is that list. We don't have “the market” on lists…this isn't the be-all and end-all list—but it is a list of the most impressive knee surgeons in the country. This information was obtained via a telephone survey of thought leaders in the field. The information in quotes is what we heard about these surgeons.

In alphabetical order, here are the top 26 knee surgeons in the United States.

Robert L. Barrack, M.D. is the Charles F. and Joanne Knight Distinguished Professor of Orthopedic Surgery at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. He is also the chief of orthopedics at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, as well as chief of Adult Reconstructive Surgery. Dr. Barrack is on the executive board of The Knee Society. “He applies great practical knowledge to clinical problems and is a real leader in the field. He has advanced the field with his randomized prospective studies of the management of patellofemoral arthritis.”

Walter B. Beaver, Jr., M.D. is the medical director at OrthoCarolina Hip and Knee Center in Charlotte, North Carolina. He is also program director for the Hip and Knee Course of the International Congress for Joint Reconstruction. “He is a terrific surgeon, and is very familiar with the business aspects of our field, which is especially important in today's changing healthcare environment.”

Keith R. Berend, M.D. is an orthopedic surgeon with Joint Implant Surgeons in Columbus, Ohio. He is co-developer of the Biomet Rapid Recovery Program. “He is foremost known as an outstanding technical surgeon. He understands the importance of efficiency, and he consistently gets high quality results. He is a high volume surgeon who does an unusually good job of tracking patient results—most high volume orthopedic surgeons don’t do that.”

Michael E. Berend, M.D. is an orthopedic surgeon at the Center for Hip & Knee Surgery/St. Francis Health in Mooresville, Indiana. He is currently on the executive board of the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons (AAHKS). “He has done substantial research on total and partial knee replacement. He is a really high volume surgeon, doing 800-1,000 cases per year.”

Daniel J. Berry, M.D. is the chair of orthopedic surgery at Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, and in 2011-2012 was president of The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS). He is also a past president of AAHKS “He is a consummate leader with excellent analytical skills.”
Robert E. Booth, Jr., M.D. is the chief of Orthopaedic Surgery at Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia and a former president of The Knee Society. He is known for his work on the Legacy Knee. “His most significant contribution has been making us understand the importance of efficiency in the OR. Technically, he is an incredible surgeon; he has probably done more knee replacements than anyone in the country.”

Henry D. Clarke, M.D. is an assistant professor of orthopedics at Mayo Clinic in Arizona. “He is an excellent surgeon who is well respected in our community. He is an up-and-coming star because he is so insightful and stands out as a clinical researcher in all areas of the knee.”

Craig J. Della Valle, M.D. is an orthopedic surgeon at Midwest Orthopaedics at Rush and associate professor at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. He is also director of the Adult Reconstructive Fellowship at Rush University Medical Center/Central DuPage Hospital. Dr. Della Valle is on the executive board of The Knee Society. “He is an incredibly talented, thoughtful surgeon who is advancing the field with his research.”

Douglas A. Dennis, M.D. is an orthopedic surgeon with Colorado Joint Replacement in Denver. He is a past president of The Knee Society and AAHKS, and is executive director of Operation Walk Denver. “He has really expanded our understanding of the kinematics of the knee through his video fluoroscopy studies. He is a good man who really knows how to interact with patients.”

Thomas K. Fehring, M.D. is co-director of the Hip and Knee Center and director of the Adult Reconstructive Fellowship at OrthoCarolina in Charlotte, North Carolina. He will be president of The Knee Society in 2013 and president of AAHKS in 2014. “He has been able to do important multicenter studies on why the knee fails. He has also expanded our knowledge of how to treat infections.”

Andrew A. Freiberg, M.D. is vice chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. He is chief of the Hip & Knee Replacement Service and an associate professor of Orthopedic Surgery at Harvard Medical School. “He is known for doing partial knee replacement and is a stellar surgeon. He is very personable and enjoys working with residents and fellows.”

Jorge Galante, M.D. is an orthopedic surgeon at Midwest Orthopaedics at Rush and a professor at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. He is a past president of the Orthopaedic Research and Education Foundation. “His knee inventions have made major contributions to our field, especially those regarding unicompartmental knees. Although retired from practice, he continues to expand the field via research.”

Robert S. Gorab, M.D. is an orthopedic surgeon and one of the managing partners of Orthopaedic Specialty Institute in Orange, California. He is an attending physician and former department chairman at St. Joseph Hospital in Orange, and an associate professor of Orthopedics at the University of California, Irvine School of Medicine. “He is a very gifted clinician who is meticulous with his technique and understands and applies the principles of knee surgery. He doesn’t use a cookbook approach, but instead individualizes treatment based upon patient needs and presentation.”

Arlen D. Hanssen, M.D. is an orthopedic surgeon at Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. He is a past president of The Knee Society and serves on the executive board of that organization. “He is a very skilled surgeon who gets great outcomes and is compassionate. He is also well engaged with the academic world and routinely publishes work that is important for our field.”

William J. Hozack, M.D. is an orthopedic surgeon at The Rothman Institute in Philadelphia and a professor at Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals. He is a past president of AAHKS. “He is a leader in investigating new technologies like navigation. Whenever there is a new procedure or clinical problem he will adopt it, study it, then report on it—the good and the bad. People pay attention to what he says.”

David J. Jacofsky, M.D. is an orthopedic surgeon and chairman of The Center for Orthopedic Research and Education (CORE) in Arizona. He is also a SHRI Senior Scientist and Head for SHRI/CORE Orthopedic Research Lab. “He does a lot of complex knee surgery...things that others won’t take on, including a lot of revision work. The fact that he was trained in trauma and tumor work is a real plus.”

Raymond Kim, M.D. is an orthopedic surgeon with Colorado Joint Replacement in Denver. He is also a writer and supervising editor of the AAOS Now column, “Ahead of the Curve.” “He is an innovative, up and coming star in the joint replacement world. He is doing some exciting implant design work and is known for his revision surgeries. He is also an excellent educator.”

Adolph V. Lombardi, Jr., M.D., F.A.C.S. is president of Joint Implant Surgeons, Inc. in New Albany, Ohio.
He is on the executive board of The Knee Society and is known for creating the Vanguard Knee System, among other products. “He is an outstanding human being who works harder than just about anyone I know. He does about 1,000 cases a year and is very dedicated to his research.”

Ryan M. Nunley, M.D. is an assistant professor of Orthopedic Surgery at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. “He takes on the tough cases. He is also very innovative with regard to implant design and is doing some interesting work with robotics and knee navigation. He is also helping to bring the EOS imaging system to the forefront of our field.”

Mark W. Pagnano, M.D. is a professor of orthopedics at Mayo Clinic in Minnesota and is on the executive board of The Knee Society. “His surgical skills are outstanding; he is also an excellent clinical researcher who has contributed to our knowledge of surgical approaches and rehabilitation.”

Chitranjan S. Ranawat, M.D. is a clinical professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at Weill Medical College of Cornell University in New York, and is an attending orthopedic surgeon at the Hospital for Special Surgery. He is also director of the Ranawat Orthopaedic Center at Lenox Hill Hospital as well as at the Hospital for Special Surgery. He was the founding president of The Knee Society and is a past president of AAHKS. “He is one of the fathers of knee surgery. Most of the top knee surgeons employ techniques he has taught us.”

Aaron G. Rosenberg, M.D. is an orthopedic surgeon at Midwest Orthopaedics at Rush and associate professor at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. “He has been one of the top knee guys and one of the lead designers of the Zimmer knee products for more than 20 years. He is the whole package—a great surgeon, educator, and design surgeon.”

Richard Scott, M.D. is chief of the Adult Reconstructive Service at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston. He is also a professor at Harvard Medical School. “His technical skills and diagnostic abilities are exceptional. He is a real credit to our field.”

Giles R. Scuderi, M.D. is vice president of orthopedic services for the North Shore-LIJ Health System in New York. An attending orthopedic surgeon at Lenox Hill Hospital and Franklin Medical Center, Dr. Scuderi is also the current president of The Knee Society. Additionally, he is an assistant clinical professor of Orthopedic Surgery at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and one of the directors of the Insall Scott Kelly Institute for Orthopedics and Sports Medicine. “He is a very knowledgeable total knee surgeon who has tons of experience and is doing important research. He is also just a super nice guy.”

Peter F. Sharkey, M.D. is an orthopedic surgeon at The Rothman Institute in Philadelphia and a professor at Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals. “He is a really good surgeon with a high volume practice. He has contributed a lot to the literature and has won several awards for his work on primary and revision knees.”

Thomas P. Vail, M.D. is a professor and chairman in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of California, San Francisco. He is the current president of AAHKS. “He is a well rounded orthopedic surgeon with excellent technical skills. As president of AAHKS he is very engaged in trying to work through the healthcare reform issues in order to ensure that we’re well represented.” ♦